

March 17, 2020

The Honorable Chad Wolf  
Acting Secretary  
Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20528

**RECEIVED**

**By ESEC at 3:25 pm, Mar 18, 2020**

Dear Acting Secretary Wolf:

Governors, states and territories across the country are rapidly mobilizing to respond to and mitigate the impact of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Given the recent challenges associated with travel restrictions, several airports have been overwhelmed by new screening requirements. Additionally, in order to slow the impact of COVID-19, several states have closed our Departments of Motor Vehicles and other state facilities.

We remain concerned about the prolonged impact of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) on our states and territories, supply chains, the travel industry and the economy. On behalf of the nations' governors, we urge the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to institute an extension of the REAL ID program for no less than one year.

We believe an extension will allow all of us to focus our efforts on combatting the spread and severity of COVID-19. More time will also give Congress the ability to pass legislation that will update the 2005 REAL ID Act and bring it up to speed with today's technology. This will also give DHS time to make regulatory changes.

Governors support the intent and purpose of the REAL ID Act. States and territories are investing their resources to raise public awareness, provide timely REAL ID services, and adopt best practices to achieve feasible REAL ID benchmarks. Despite these efforts to comply with the law, the 15-year-old statute has not kept up with today's technology. Additionally, the current regulatory framework creates unnecessary administrative burdens and constraints. This has led to slower and lower levels of issuance of REAL ID compliant cards as well as frustrations for American citizens.

Governors recommend several administrative, regulatory and statutory changes to accomplish our four top goals. Governors believe these recommendations will help to:

1. expedite issuance of REAL ID compliant cards,
2. ensure better messaging and education of American citizens,
3. increase resourcing at the state, territorial and federal level, and
4. maintain security standards while implementing innovative technological solutions.

We appreciate your consideration of this important issue and urge immediate action. Please find our recommendations as an attachment to this letter.

Sincerely,

The National Governors Association

## **Recommendations:**

The National Governors Association recommends the following administrative, regulatory and statutory changes to accomplish four top goals. Governors believe these recommendations will help to:

1. expedite issuance of REAL ID compliant cards,
2. ensure better messaging and education of American citizens,
3. increase resourcing at the state, territorial and federal level, and
4. maintain security standards while implementing innovative technological solutions.

### *Administrative Policy and Regulatory Changes:*

- DHS should immediately update its list of acceptable Real ID identity verification documents for application presentation, including, documents currently accepted by TSA for satisfying airport security protocol.
- DHS should create a unified, national marketing plan to intensify public outreach that will educate more American citizens, avoid excessive delays and minimize additional costs to states and territories
- DHS should set up an exception process for older applicants and vetted populations.
- DHS should delay the recertification process until such a time that a state and territory is at least at a 75 percent issuance rate.
- Consider State-to-State REAL ID reciprocity, eliminating the need to repeat documentation and verification processes.
- Create an easy-to-use, online and print resource documents for applicants, such as a required document checklist.

### *Federal Statutory Changes:*

- Provide funding for states through a REAL ID state grant program to support increased staffing, training and public education efforts.
- Modernize the REAL ID Act to keep pace with new and innovative technological innovations.
- Appropriate dedicated funding to DHS for a national marketing campaign.
- Clarify within the Act the ability for states, territories and DHS to recognize and accept electronic verification of documents through federal and state systems rather than requiring paper documents.
- Allow states and territories to utilize information from currently existing federal travel programs, such as TSA Pre-Check and Global Entry.



KATE BROWN  
Governor

**RECEIVED**

**By ESEC at 10:53 am, Mar 23, 2020**

March 19, 2020

The Honorable Chad F. Wolf, Acting Secretary  
United States Department of Homeland Security  
2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. SE  
Washington, D.C. 20593

Dear Acting Secretary Wolf,

Oregon has rapidly mobilized to respond to and mitigate the spread and impact of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). I am concerned about the prolonged impact of COVID-19 in our state, including on our travel industry and statewide economy. I urge the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to institute an extension of the REAL ID program beyond October 1, 2020 for a period of no less than one year.

Given the recent challenges associated with travel restrictions, several airports have been overwhelmed by new screening requirements, including Oregon's largest airport, Portland International Airport. An extension will allow Oregon to focus its efforts on combatting the spread and severity of COVID-19.

To comply with the REAL ID Act, Oregon Driver and Motor Vehicle Services (DMV) is in the midst of a ten-year system modernization project. Completion of the project, which includes the ability to issue REAL ID compliant credentials, is scheduled for July 6, 2020. The project is currently on schedule. However, with the constant challenges presented by COVID-19, the projected completion date now faces serious jeopardy. A one-year extension of the enforcement date for the REAL ID program would ensure that Oregon can comply with the Act, and our citizens will not be adversely impacted when attempting to travel domestically.

In addition, as cases of COVID-19 escalate and as states and the federal government issue increasingly stringent advisories, it's possible Department of Transportation may be forced to delay or even cease some DMV services. An extension of enforcement of the program is the only way Oregonians will be able to fully meet the requirements and comply with the Act.

I support the intent and purpose of the REAL ID Act. Oregon is investing resources to raise public awareness, develop efficient REAL ID services, and adopt best practices to achieve feasible REAL ID benchmarks.

I appreciate your consideration of this request and urge immediate action. Please find attached additional recommendations made by the National Governors Association that I fully support.

Sincerely,

Governor Kate Brown

## **Recommendations:**

The National Governors Association recommends the following administrative, regulatory and statutory changes to accomplish four top goals. Governors believe these recommendations will help to:

1. Expedite issuance of REAL ID compliant cards,
2. Ensure better messaging and education of American citizens,
3. Increase resourcing at the state and federal level, and
4. Maintain security standards while implementing innovative technological solutions.

### *Administrative Policy and Regulatory Changes:*

- DHS should immediately update its list of acceptable Real ID identity verification documents for application presentation, including, documents currently accepted by TSA for satisfying airport security protocol.
- DHS should create a unified, national marketing plan to intensify public outreach that will educate more American citizens, avoid excessive delays and minimize additional costs to states.
- DHS should set up an exception process for older applicants and vetted populations.
- DHS should delay the recertification process until such a time that a state is at least at a 75 percent issuance rate.
- Consider State-to-State REAL ID reciprocity, eliminating the need to repeat documentation and verification processes.
- Create an easy-to-use, online and print resource documents for applicants, such as a required document checklist.

### *Federal Statutory Changes:*

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- Appropriate dedicated funding to DHS for a national marketing campaign.
- Clarify within the Act the ability for states and DHS to recognize and accept electronic verification of documents through federal and state systems rather than requiring paper documents.
- Allow states to utilize information from currently existing federal travel programs, such as TSA Pre-Check and Global Entry.